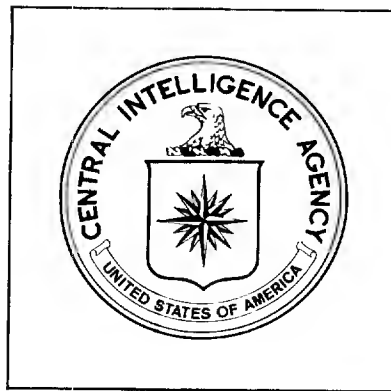


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STAFF NOTES:

Soviet Union Eastern Europe

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January 20, 1975



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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

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C O N T E N T S

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Shelepin Indicates Support
for Brezhnev and Detente

Trade union leader Aleksandr Shelepin continues to demonstrate support for Brezhnev and detente. On January 16, the trade union newspaper *Trud* carried a brief report on Shelepin's speech to the trade union plenum the day before. The report refers to Brezhnev as "head" of the Politburo. At the plenum, Shelepin spoke about Brezhnev's "vivid and pithy speech" at the December meeting of the Central Committee and about his "tremendous personal contribution to the implementation of the 24th CPSU Congress' peace program."

Earlier, on January 9, *Trud* had published an article supportive of detente by M. Baglay, a member of the Institute of the International Workers' Movement, which appears to have ties to the trade unions. The article seeks to explain the place of the ideological struggle in an era of detente, but does not question the policy of detente. Baglay, in fact, declares that the main thing is that "inertia and misunderstanding are obviously subsiding, and that the era of fear and suspicion is receding into the past and giving way to mutual trust, sincerity, and a genuine interest in cooperation." The "reactionary imperialist circles in the West" that are attempting to "wreck" this process, exacerbate both the ideological and political struggle. Nevertheless, Baglay concludes, peaceful coexistence and the ideological struggle are not incompatible, and "it is perfectly possible to argue and, at the same time, together eliminate the threat of world war and organize peaceful cooperation between peoples." Concerning the world revolutionary process, Baglay asserts that the Soviets are not trying to export revolution, but are "helping" the process through "the favorable influence of peaceful coexistence on its development."

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Although mentioning the defensive side of the ideological struggle, Baglay gives more attention to its active or proselytizing role. His discussion recalls something of the tone of Brezhnev's victory-through-contacts speech in Alma-Ata in August 1973. The struggle does not exclude dialogue, Baglay explains, since "among our ideological opponents there are serious figures who at least adhere to some sort of generally accepted rule of polemics." While the Soviets oppose "ideological sabotage" under the guise of "the liberalization of the exchange of ideas," Baglay contends that "we are not isolationists and we want to know about all the best things that mankind has produced." He describes the attraction of Marxism-Leninism in the West and how the ideological struggle helps the working class in capitalist countries.

Finally, Baglay supports cooperation with Social Democrats, saying that this can be done without damaging either's ideological positions. He claims that cooperation between Soviet and Western trade unions "has been organized particularly successfully in the last few years." Referring specifically to trade union cooperation, but perhaps with broader implications in mind, Baglay writes that "we do not exclude compromises, including political ones," as long as cooperation develops "without interference in one another's internal affairs" and without "deideologization."

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Czechoslovakia: Plenums and Problems?

A spate of regional party meetings throughout Czechoslovakia suggests that the country's economic performance is causing unusual problems for the national leadership. The clearest sign of disagreements at the lower levels comes from the Slovak party, which has taken the highly unusual step of convening two Central Committee plenums within six weeks.

All of the recent meetings have discussed "with critical frankness" the resolution on the economy adopted at a national party plenum in late November. The fact that the speeches given in November have not been published has added to speculation that sharp differences have yet to be resolved.

The problem of adjusting the system of economic decision-making may be one area of contention. Early last month, Slovak party presidium member Herbert Durkovic published two articles in the party political weekly citing the need to mobilize middle-level management in decision-making. He also suggested that "not every" idea of the Prague Spring reformers should be flatly rejected as "reactionary." This notion would offend party hard liners, who are obsessed with holding the line against revisionism, and most professional party workers would also be likely to oppose any changes that might threaten their vested interests.

Durkovic's ideas on the reform of economic management received some indirect support from party boss Husak at this week's conference of party leaders in the army. Durkovic also gained endorsement from Slovak party leader Lenart, who at a Slovak plenum on January 16 warned of the "need to approach problem-solving in a new and courageous way."

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East Germany Names
New Foreign Minister

East Berlin's announcement Monday that Oskar Fischer will replace ailing and aged Foreign Minister Winzer portends no basic shift in East German foreign policy.

The selection of the 51-year-old Fischer, who had been Winzer's chief deputy, reflects party chief Honecker's penchant for promoting younger men who proved their mettle in the Free German Youth organization that he developed. Fischer's promotion thus marks another victory for the postwar apparatchiks. He is one of the few officials in the Foreign Ministry who is also a full member of the party Central Committee.

Fischer is a Sudeten German who returned to Germany in 1946. A specialist in East European affairs, he has extensive experience in both the party's international relations department and in the Foreign Ministry. Apparently with Honecker's support he was promoted over four more senior deputy foreign ministers in 1973 to become Winzer's chief deputy.

The decision of the 72-year-old Winzer to retire follows a long period of illness. He was incapacitated for the first nine months of 1974; during that time, Fischer stood in as the "acting foreign minister."

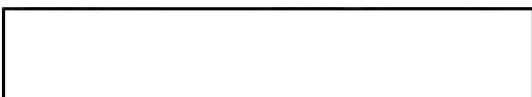
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